

Good morning Montgomery County Council,

As a parent and home owner in the Bentley Park Community (“Bentley Park”) in Burtonsville, MD, I am excited to learn that you are seriously considering moving the current location of Burtonsville Elementary School (“Burtonsville Elementary”) to Bentley Park. My eldest son is an “A” student in his third year at Burtonsville and we have another child who will enter Kindergarten there next year.

I offer this note in support of fully funding the movement and rebuild of Burtonsville Elementary to our Bentley Park community for the following reasons:

**SAFETY:** The student body has simply outgrown the size and capacity of the current school. There are no walkable streets around the building, so you have to either drive a car or employ the bus system. We get to the school close to an hour before pickup, in the hope of not being one of the cars double parked close to the main and very active thoroughfare (Route 29). It’s simply not safe to have cars lined on both sides of the street, with groups of children and families walking in the middle of the street because the school grounds lack space or adequate parking. I am thankful for the parent volunteers who steer traffic, but 5 to 10 years olds should have a safer environment for egress and ingress to their school building.

**OVER CAPACITY:** I went to visit my son at school one day and was alarmed to find him wearing his winter coat during class. When I asked him why, he said there was no room in or by his cubbie to hang it. The classroom was overcrowded with desk tables, supplies and school items piled high in every corner. As a visiting parent, there was barely room for me find a chair to sit to observe the class. That is unacceptable. How can close to 30 children learn freely in such a tight space? Students should not have to wear their coats during class because there is minimal room for them to hang them. That is not a comfortable atmosphere for learning. Furthermore, the students are taught on a large display screen. I am all for innovation; however, the classroom is very small, so they are forced to sit very close to the screen. That can’t be good for their eyes.

**LACK OF SPACE:** My son has lunch in a cafeteria that looks like a large classroom. Their lunches are handed to them in takeaway boxes, with short periods of time to eat because they have to leave to make room for the next class coming in. My son’s lunch time is also late morning to accommodate all the necessary lunch periods in the small room. By the time he gets home, he is ravenous. If he were allowed to have lunch at a reasonable time in the afternoon, his meal would likely hold him over, such that he could focus on learning, instead of counting the hours until he can eat at home.

Lastly, the administrative offices are crowded, small and chaotic. I adore the school principal and staff. One thing that drew my attention to the school was their love of children and commitment to learning. It’s why I opted to send my son to Burtonsville over private or an independent school. However, it is very dismaying to visit the school for a meeting with the Principal and see piles of paper everywhere because their office has limited space.

This is an environment for learning and molding young minds. Montgomery County is one of the most progressive counties in the nation. These conditions would never happen in the Potomac side of the county. Our students here in Burtonsville deserve better, as well.

From my understanding a move of the school was approved for an addition 10 years ago; however, an influx of innovation and newly built communities (such as Bentley Park) have increased the population, such that a mere addition to the school is not enough. **I implore you to approve the necessary budget to build a new school in Bentley Park and fully fund it.**

Thank you for your consideration of my remarks.

Best regards,  
C. Skye Young, Esq.